



Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Recommendation 232: Recommendations on the FY 2018 DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management Budget Request

Background

Each year the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Program develops its budget request for the fiscal year two years beyond the current fiscal year, incorporating budget requests from DOE field offices to develop the EM Program budget request to the president.

DOE EM Headquarters typically issues guidelines to the field offices advising them how much funding they should reasonably expect when developing their fiscal year +2 budget requests. The field offices then brief the public, the regulatory agencies, and the respective site-specific advisory boards and seek input from each regarding budget requests.

In spring 2016, DOE briefed the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) on the current budget window and described near-term and long-term priorities. These priorities are broadly grouped into program “visions”:

- Vision 2016—An effort to complete the demolition and removal of all five gaseous diffusion buildings at the East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) by the end of 2016.
- Vision 2020—An initiative to extend Vision 2016 to include cleanup of all facilities at ETTP and prepare to release the land for reindustrialization by the end of 2020.
- Vision 2024—The transition from cleanup activities at ETTP to address the mercury contaminated facilities at the Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12).

More specific priorities were spelled out during presentations to the board. The first priority is always maintaining safe, compliant operations. Project-specific priorities identified by DOE are as follows.

Near-term priorities (2016–2018) are:

- Complete design of the Y-12 Outfall 200 Mercury Treatment System
- Complete the Uranium-233 (U-233) Direct Disposition Campaign
- Process Transuranic (TRU) waste debris
- Design and construct the Sludge Test Facility
- Complete planning for the Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF)
- Complete Building K-27 demolition

Long-term (2019–2022) priorities include:

- Transition to the U-233 Processing Campaign
- Continue TRU waste debris processing and shipments
- Complete ETTP Cleanup
- Construct the Y-12 Outfall 200 Mercury Treatment Facility
- Address critical infrastructure
- Design and construct EMDF
- Design the Sludge Processing Facility

Post FY 2022 activities include:

- Addressing off-site and other groundwater problems
- Complete processing of remaining U-233 material
- Construct the Sludge Processing Facility
- Complete Y-12 and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) cleanup

Discussion

ORSSAB believes that its input to DOE in regard to the general trends in the cleanup mission and sequencing of priorities is valuable to DOE in its continued efforts to clean up Oak Ridge. We also believe that deviation from the overall sequencing through the next four decades will be minimally affected by our recommendation that consists basically of bringing forward two activities defined below.

The board understands the intricacies of sequencing and prioritizing the myriad activities of the EM Program but believes that incorporating the recommendation below into near-term planning would have minimal impact on the overall budgets for FY16, FY17, and FY18.

Recommendation

ORSSAB requests that DOE include the two items described below:

1. The design and construction of the Y-12 Outfall 200-Mercury Treatment System could be accomplished in the FY 2016-2018 time frame by using some funding for the second half of FY16 and FY17 from the plus ups. Also, the board recommends including additional funds in the FY18 budget request.
2. Rather than waiting for the completion of decontamination and decommissioning of above-ground structures, additional, although minimal, funding could be identified in the FY18 budget request for more in-depth groundwater activities at select locations, particularly to address questions related to off-site contaminant migration. The increased activity would yield data that would benefit the out-year groundwater efforts, help address unanswered questions, and dispel current perceptions of inactivity on this important aspect of environmental media.